

# Curriculum Overviews 2025-2026

## AUTUMN TERM



KS3		KS4	
ENGLISH LANGUAGE	MATHEMATICS	ENGLISH LANGUAGE	MATHEMATICS
<p><u>Creative Writing</u> <i>Know your starting point</i></p> <p>In the first week students complete baselines tests for comprehension and writing to a stimulus. Students study word class, sentence structure, grammar, spelling, handwriting, punctuation, vocabulary and figurative writing techniques. Creative writing topics include Gothic Horror and The diary extracts of Adrian Mole. An in-depth study of 'Animal Farm' presents themes, allegories, symbolism and idioms. Progress is monitored thoroughly with quizzes, summative and formative assessment points and exit tickets of key learning concepts. The end of term assessment consolidates learning with a bespoke KS3 English Language Paper 2 exam.</p>	<p><u>Engaging students with all strands of Maths</u></p> <p>Students sit a baseline assessment on arrival to Balance, which covers a mixture of the topics studied in HT1 and HT2. This ensures that work can be set with the right level of challenge. Strands covered include Number, Algebra, Geometry and Data. Topics within these include types of numbers, directed numbers, coordinates, perimeter, area, simplifying and solving equations. Progress is monitored through exit tickets primarily, as well as summative assessments following 3/4 units. All content is based on the KS3 Maths Curriculum, with some KS2 concepts revisited to support success. Lessons regularly have extension tasks/ additional objectives for students who show mastery in the main lesson objective.</p>	<p><u>Creative Writing</u> <i>Know your starting point</i></p> <p>In the first week students complete GCSE baselines tests for comprehension and writing to a stimulus. Students revisit previous English language techniques, building on figurative devices and descriptive writing in 'Heroes' Exam practice and extract analysis deepen c comprehension and students learn how to evidence inferences and intentions. Progress is monitored thoroughly with quizzes, summative and formative assessment points and exit tickets of key learning concepts.</p>	<p><u>GCSE Foundation Content</u></p> <p>Students sit a baseline assessment on arrival to Balance, which covers a mixture of the topics studied in HT1 and HT2. This ensures that work can be set with the right level of challenge. Strands covered include Number, Algebra, Geometry and Data. Topics within these include types of numbers, directed numbers, coordinates, perimeter, area, simplifying and solving equations. Progress is monitored through exit tickets primarily, as well as summative assessments following 3/4 units. All content is based on the KS4 Maths Curriculum and Foundation GCSE content, with exam questions used during independent practice. Lessons regularly have extension tasks/ additional objectives for students who show mastery in the main lesson objective.</p>
SCIENCE	PSHE	SCIENCE	PSHE
<p><u>Biological Systems</u></p> <p>Students follow a sequence of learning: how cells work, organisms, respiration, digestive system, nervous system, cardiovascular system, male and female reproduction, menstrual cycle, puberty and plant systems. Progress is monitored thoroughly with quizzes, summative and</p>	<p><u>Knowing yourself</u></p> <p>Students complete fifteen minutes of PSHE each morning with one complimentary drop down hour twice a half term. Topics include: Puberty, physical changes, personal hygiene, resilience and self-esteem, positive relationships, self-regulation, positive mindset, British values, Black History Month, neurodiversity, ASD, ADHD, fire Safety, antisocial behaviour &amp; the law.</p>	<p><u>GCSE Practice and Deeper Thinking</u></p> <p>Students revisit learning from KS3 with extended knowledge and vocabulary. Topics covered include: specialised cells, mitosis, chromosomes, meiosis, osmosis, cardiovascular system, transpiration, plant systems, photosynthesis, greenhouse systems, ecosystems, food webs and chains and biomass. Learning objectives have a GCSE exam foci and all topics are geared towards exam practice.</p>	<p><u>Knowing yourself</u></p> <p>Students complete fifteen minutes of PSHE each morning with one complimentary drop down hour twice a half term. Topics include: Puberty, sexual awareness, personal hygiene, consent and the law, sexual safety and contraception, resilience, emotional health, self-esteem, positive relationships, self-regulation, positive mindset, British values, Black History Month,</p>

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KS3 & KS4			
INSPIRE - ART	INSPIRE- KING'S TRUST AWARD	INSPIRE- KING'S TRUST NQU	INSPIRE: SKILL BUILDERS
<u>Local Artists</u> Students study Futurism, Modernism and Abstract Art through an exploration of artists featured at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, including Barbara Hepworth, Henry Moore, and Maria Lucia. Students study texture and sculpture, applying knowledge with practical tasks and recreation of great works with clay, mosaic, pencil and collage. Students visit the park to witness the scale and position of the sculptures in a natural setting, building cultural capital and appreciation for Modern Art.	<u>Independent Projects</u> With the 'Achieve Award' students work independently, for project-based learning. Choosing a topic and interest of their choice, they will research, collate, and produce a scrapbook,, which is both factual and inspiring. Once complete, students must present their project to the class, with an informative discussion of their learning. Presentation provides opportunities for students to utilise skills from the skills builder aspect of 'Inspire'. Check-points and trackers help motivate organisation and time management and at the end of the project students are issued an Award by the King's Trust. This is an excellent opportunity for students to register interest with funding for vocational, further education qualifications.	<u>Experience-based learning</u> Alongside 'Achieve' the King's Trust non-qualification unit provides students the opportunity to gain two topic-based certificates. Students will reflect on visits, trips, charity and community based experiences providing evidence of cultural capital and life-skills.. Topic 1 is 'Nature and Wellbeing' where students will work with volunteers at the Riding Disabled Association, RSPCA, RSPB, Royal British Legion, and the Dogs Trust. Other visits include Temple Newsam Farm, Fishing, pumpkin carving and Pontefract Castle. Topic 2 is 'Health and Wellbeing' and will give students the opportunity to combine History, Food Technology and Geography with 'food from across the world'. Students will reflect on visits to factories, supermarkets, bakeries and will end the project with a communal meal in a local restaurant.	<u>Self-Efficacy</u> Students build essential skills in communication, independent learning and group work, listening, speaking, problem solving, teamwork and staying positive. Lessons ,boost outcomes, perseverance and self belief and work alongside the integrated Inspire curriculum.
KS3 INSPIRE FOREST SCHOOL	KS3 & KS4 MUSIC THERAPY		KS4 INSPIRE FURTHER EDUCATION & VOCATIONAL
<u>One with nature</u> With specialist guidance from a specialist teacher, our students will get the opportunity to reconnect with nature and learn basic survival skills. Students will actively participate in foraging, team building, den-making, fire safety, cooking and quality, real-life experiences that will provide essential life skills and life-long learning. This will form part of the NQU 'Nature & Wellbeing'.	Students study Music of Asia as a complimentary cross-curricular link to 'Foods from around the World'. They will learn note values, pitch names, notes of a C major scale, notes of the major pentatonic scale, minor pentatonic scale, boomwhacker colours for pitch. Students will use their new knowledge to learn to play the 'Chinese Dragon' and 'Sakura' independently and as an ensemble.		<u>Next Steps</u> In partnership with local businesses our students will learn construction and hair and beauty vocational awards. This will feed into the King's Trust, student-led project-based learning with official accreditation and links to further education.
KS3 & KS4 INSPIRE 'Masterchef'	CULTURAL CAPITAL		KS3 KS4 Career Advisor

<p>Students learn traditional dishes, indigenous foods, geography and culture from around the world. They explore the UK, France, Spain, Italy, Japan, and China; tasting and comparing foods.</p> <p>To replicate the GCSE food technology exam, students learn a range of cooking skills. They design a Mediterranean menu as part of a 'Masterchef' competition, consolidating their culinary skills.. Under a strict time limit, students cook and present their food to win the title KS3 and KS4 Balance Masterchef winner.</p>	<p>Our curriculum is bursting with opportunities to promote cultural capital. Excursions and visits are scheduled within a four-week cycle and have cross-curricular links to promote worthwhile and meaningful experiences. The <i>Inspire Curriculum</i> combines thematic schemes of learning, with practical subjects such as Technology, Media, Art, and Music. There is a local, cultural focus, visiting English Heritage, National Trust, Art Galleries, Sculpture parks, Farms, NSPCC, NSPCA, Theatres, Landmarks and historical sites. These are central to the Balance Ethos; Resilience, Respect and Responsibility.</p>	<p>Students are encouraged to work towards vocational and academic qualifications with a bespoke and personalised service from our expert Career Advisor. This guidance encourages long-term aspirations with many students achieving grants for tools and equipment on completion of the 'Achieve Award'. This opportunity is an essential stepping stone to reintegrate some of our most deprived and disengaged students back into society, with purpose and renewed self-efficacy.</p>
EXIT TICKETS		
	<p>Metacognitive plenaries identify immediate learning and track pupil progress. Focussed questioning, examples, problem-solving and hypothetical theories are presented to consolidate key concepts and learning objectives. Each exit ticket builds a portfolio of evidence, revision cards, and key elements of topics for quick reference. Each exit ticket is attached to work, in folders and enables students to visualise success and engagement.</p>	